

Madam

~~Mr.~~ Chairman, and members of the committee. My name is

Stephenie Ambrose Tubbs, I live in Helena and I am here to testify in favor of House Bill 417. This bill represents an investment in attracting future visitors to Montana. It has been my good fortune to be able to travel to many of the signature events held so far throughout the country and it seems to me the savvy states are the ones who have figured out that the interest in Lewis and Clark Expedition is not going to disappear after the Bicentennial. They view their signature events as a way of exposing visitors to the wonders of their particular states so that they will tell others of the spectacular places they saw and return for visits in the future.

My father, who wrote the bestseller *Undaunted Courage*, was fond of saying, in terms of Lewis and Clark sites, Montana had the best places and stories along a trail that is filled with extraordinary places and stories. In October of 2000 he addressed the Bicentennial Commission in Great Falls and admonished everyone to quit 'Burning Daylight' and start making serious preparations for the Bicentennial's arrival in Montana. Many listened. He would

be very proud of the work done here in his adopted home state to prepare for the arrival of the Lewis and Clark enthusiasts. At the same time he would say now is not the time to abandon these efforts. The state needs to support the hard work of the dedicated organizers running the Explore the Big Sky Signature Event in Great Falls in June; and the Clark on the Yellowstone Event planned for July of 2006. These people recognize the power of the story of the Expedition, its wonderful ability to teach nearly every subject to every age group, especially youngsters. They recognize that we are blessed to live in state of such varied landscapes and one so rich in cultural and historical significance. Most Montanans I know are extremely proud of their state's history and scenic beauty. They enjoy sharing it with out of state relatives and friends. I respectfully suggest that it is the duty of this legislature to do the same thing. By funding these Signature events you increase the likelihood of their success; success which gives us a tremendous leg up in terms of future visitors to Montana. Ask yourself how many times you brought visitors to the Great Falls or

Pompey's Tower or indeed any of the numerous spots along the Lewis and Clark trail here in Montana, and they told you how lucky you were to live near these special places and how they would be sure to come back for future visits. These signature events present a unique opportunity for our state to shine. I know if my father were here he would be in favor of the state spending more money on them. In fact if it were up to him I think Montana would have hosted all sixteen of the National signature events; such is the wealth of our state in terms of Lewis and Clark history. But the trail is a National one and we are up against some stiff competition from our fellow trail states.

In October of last year I attended the Circle of Cultures Signature Event in Bismarck ND where attendance reached 50,000. During my remarks at the close of the event I invited the audience to come to Montana for our Signature Events and said that I thought Montana would draw just as many if not more people and that they would have an even better time. A fellow speaker from North Dakota dismissed my remarks and said that North Dakota would

undoubtedly set the record. I mention this because I know the citizens of this great state will not let a challenge from North Dakota go unanswered.

It has been my experience that as one historian said, every generation rediscovers Lewis and Clark. By supporting this measure you will be staking a claim on those future Lewis and Clark trail travelers; the ones who return as I did, because they fell in love with Montana. Thank You.